

An  
Inaugural Dissertation  
on  
Gastritis.

by W. M. Maxwell

admitted March 7<sup>th</sup> 1821.

1845

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Amputation of the

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# Gastritis

This disease is divided by Aetologists into two species, viz. Phlegmonous and Erysipelatous. It is to the former of these, that, I intend to confine myself.

Gastritis of this nature is most usually caused by acrid substances of various kinds, especially, when the mucus of the stomach has been abraded, or so changed, as not, properly to perform its office: among these are arsenic, oxy muriate of mercury, alkalis, the galic and mineral acids. It is worthy of notice, that, the substances most acrid to the taste are not, those which produce most irritation; the strongest spices are often taken into the stomach without, the least injury whatever; while, on the other hand, the most insipid substances affect it most dreadfully. It may, also, be caused by foods of an improper nature, by potations of spirituous liquors, by large draughts of cold drinks, such as cold water, iced

1840

punch or iced creams, taken when the patient, is in  
 a copious perspiration, and at, a time, when the body  
 is rapidly parting with its heat. It is, also, occasioned  
 by external violence, from wounds, blows, and by pressure  
 on the insipiform cartilages when a luxation of it takes  
 place, or it is broken so, as to press on the stomach.  
 It may, likewise, be produced by contusions or distortions  
 by taking into the stomachs hard and indigestible  
 substances. — By poisons or corrosive substances. It is,  
 also, said, that, repelled Exanthemata and Gout,  
 may be a cause. Gastritis may arise from acrid  
 matter generated within the body, as very often  
 happens in various ulcerous affections of the fauces  
 and Oesophagus; and it may, moreover, proceed from  
 inflammation of some of the viscera, as the Liver,  
 intestines &c, extending to the stomach. Like the other  
 phlogmasia it may be excited by causes of sudden  
 plethora, particularly by the suppressions of accu-  
 stomed hemorrhages or habitual evacuations.

The terminations of this disease like all of this

and in some cases the object of the  
writing is to inform the reader of the  
author's feelings and opinions on a  
subject, or to express his views on a  
particular course of action. In such  
cases the writer is free to express his  
thoughts and feelings in his own words,  
and to use any style or language which  
he may think fit. In other cases, however,  
the writer is bound to follow a certain  
style or form, and to use certain words  
and phrases. This is the case, for  
example, in the writing of letters, where  
the writer is expected to follow certain  
conventions, and to use certain words  
and phrases. In such cases the writer  
must be careful to follow the rules, and  
to use the words and phrases which are  
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order, is either by resolution, suppuration, or gangrene, and it is also said by writers in some instances to terminate in schirrus. The tendency of this disease to admit of resolution, may be perceived by its having arisen from no violent cause, by the moderate appearance of the symptoms and the remissions of these being gradual, arising principally in consequence of remedies employed in the course of the first, or at farthest, the second week of the disease.

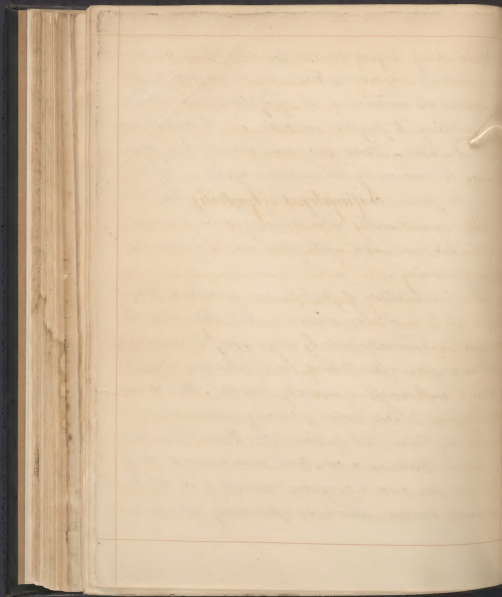
The tendency to suppuration may be ascertained by the symptoms continuing in a moderate way for more than one or two weeks, and also by a considerable abatement of pain, while a feeling of weight, and oppression still exists. When the abscess is actually formed, cold shiverings ensue, with marked exacerbations in the evening, which are succeeded by night sweats, diarrhoea, copious flow of urine, watchfulness, and other symptoms of hectic fever, and these at length prove fatal, unless, the pus is thrown up by vomiting, and then the ulcer heals.





The tendency to gangrene in this complaint, as in other internal inflammations, may be suspected by the unusual violence of its symptoms, and their not yielding to proper remedies in the commencement of the disease. - When gangrene actually takes place, it may be known by the sudden cessation of the pains, the pulse continuing its frequency but becoming weaker with cold clammy and partial sweats, delirium, and with the other marks of increasing debility ensuing.

The termination of gastritis in schirrus is thought by writers to be of rare occurrences; but, when it is the case, it is characterized by these symptoms, nausea, vomiting soon after taking food: likewise very obstinate costiveness is usually present. When ulceration takes place, hectic generally ensues, which eventually takes the patient off. When this is present, there is a constant eructation of very fetid air, and a frequent vomiting of dark coloured mucus, which is extremely offensive.



2

The pain which attends is not constant, and is more or less severe according to circumstances; it is augmented by receiving an acrid or acid substance into the stomach, but, on the contrary, when mild articles are taken in, even as milk, great &c they occasion little or no inconvenience.

### Symptoms of Gastritis.

The symptoms of gastritis like those of most other inflammatory are not very complicated. The pain of the stomach is very often violent and accompanied with a sense of burning heat, - extending to the throat. The pain is not always confined exactly to the epigastric region, but extends as far down as the umbilicus and often shoots to the back. It is, also, accompanied with much prostration of strength, attended with pyrexia. The pulse at the commencement is rapid, or frequent, quick, hard, and short, and sometimes intermittent. In more advanced stages tension across the epigastric and umbilicus may succeed, accompanied with flatulency and some



vomiting; especially when any thing is swallowed, it is  
 immediate, and the substance is, whether solid or  
 liquid, to rise like bile. There is a most distressing  
 thirst, attended, with restlessness, anxiety, continual  
 tossing of the body, with great debility, watching  
 and delirium. The disease runs on with great ra-  
 pidity, and if not much arrested an aggravation  
 in its symptoms takes place, violent fever, - there  
 is great loss of strength, with fainting, - a short, and  
 interrupted respiration, cold clammy sweats, heaving  
 cough of the extremities, and extremities purple, and  
 a tremor is soon put to the patient's assistance.  
 I have now I believe, enumerated all the symptoms  
 that generally accompany this disease, but there not  
 infrequently occurs a variety of anomalous affections,  
 arising from which are called delirious sympathies.  
 These affections are the result of bad observation,  
 as I have never seen them described by any writer  
 whom I have perused on this subject. They consisted  
 by a woman in her delirium, supported by a



number of respectable practitioners of this city, and by  
 us by Dr. Haysick, that in more than one  
 case he has observed accompanying jaundice a vir-  
 cid gain in the great vein, this remark is certain-  
 ly of great practical importance; it demonstrates  
 it as somewhat the pathology of jaundice is not  
 an morbidity by itself, that jaundice may now and  
 then be accompanied with an acute gain in  
 the great vein. During the prevalence of the yellow  
 fever in St. Louis, Mo., it was observed by the  
 above mentioned authority, that, subjects attacked  
 with this disease were troubled with a severe  
 rigidity, or paralytic affection, in one or both  
 arms; this is an uncommon symptom in jaundice,  
 it is a very frequent attendant; moreover, it is re-  
 marked by Dr. Haysick, that during the yellow  
 fever and jaundice, arising from common causes,  
 that the patients are always more than affected  
 with much inflammation, pain and tenderness;  
 it is observed, that he never saw a case in which these





symptoms, and even that recovery.

## Prognosis.

The prognosis of typhoid is seldom favourable. If the pulse, vomiting, and fever are not relieved in the course of four or five days, we may suppose suppurations of some kind will most certainly take place. But if the symptoms become milder, and the medicines have been administered at the commencement of the disease, it may, probably, terminate in resolution; but, it is more dangerous if the pulse becomes more soft, and full about the sixth day, vomiting being in attendance, the pain gradually abating, the urine throwing down a sediment or diarrhoea supervening, we are to be considered as prognosticating symptoms.

## Diagnosis.

The diagnosis of typhoid is not difficult to a person acquainted with its symptoms.

1800

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It is impossible to confound it with any other disease if this is the case. In cramps and flatulent pain of the stomach, the pulse is commonly natural or nearly so, nor are the latter attended with the sudden prostration of strength, which accompanies gastritis. In these, there is often no vomiting and it is very uncommon to be so constant or so frequently excited by the ingesta. The augmentation of pain on inserting any thing into the stomach is much less observable in flatulency, pain and cramps, than in gastritis; in the former, the great increase of pain on pressure, one of the best diagnostic of gastritis is not remarked. The hicough too, which is more for merit attention in the latter than in the former, aids here in distinguishing it.

Besides, in spasms of the stomach, the case more frequently turns for gastritis there is such a sense of constriction and suffocation, that the voice is often suspended, while in gastritis, it



is more free and the cry of the patient, are often piercing. It is said by Sauvages and Quarin that it is almost impossible to distinguish gastritis from inflammation of the epigastric muscles, in which, at, is said, all the symptoms of the former are present, in a less degree. But, by a little attention, however, the cases may easily be distinguished. In the former as in gastritis, indeed, is somewhat increased by pressure, but it is also augmented in a greater degree by motion, that is, by those motions, are which the epigastric <sup>muscles</sup> are concerned or brought into action, which is not the case in gastritis. The state of the pulse in the former case, also, is very materially different. If affected at all, instead of being small and feeble as in gastritis, it is strong as in most other phlegmic muscles; besides, there is little or no tendency to vomiting in this case and some degree of swelling of the muscles may very often be observed; this symptom however is not invariably concomitant,



and there is frequently some degree of swelling about the stomach in gastritis. Those who die of this disease show no dissection the villous coat of the stomach greatly inflamed; upon its surface is found a coat of congealed lymph covering the whole of the inflamed parts. This is exhibited a great thickening of the substance of the organ at the part, which is inflamed; the inflammation rarely extending over the whole of its surface, when ulceration has actually taken place, the ulcers sometimes are found to penetrate through all its coats, and sometimes only through one or two of them.

### Treatment.

The treatment of gastritis is very obvious; the first indication to be fulfilled in this disease is to arrest the rapid strides of inflammation in the organ, which is so vastly important to the human machine; in these we demand; our serious attention; for if not timely arrested the patient is soon cut off.





Among the most efficient remedies is decidedly venesection. There is no disease in which it is ought to be carried to a greater extent, and in fact is, than in gastritis. Cases are on record in which venesection has been employed and repeated nine or eleven times a day for several days in succession. This remedy must be adapted to a vast extent in this connection, depending of the state of the pulse or a rarer, preservation of the system. It must be carried as far as the falling constitution will admit. When we are called to a case the lancet should not be used too liberally, but freely; if the patient is of a plethoric or robust constitution and an attempt to draw him in least, tends to that, and if that state of the system, are not by this subdued it may next need to be repeated to the same effect. Even the Empirics who see the disease, are sparingly have carried it to the extent of two hundred ounces in two weeks. The cure of this Empiricist. The use to depend, principally upon this remedy,



therefore, we must preserve our life; and the disease  
 will be the consequence of our remedies and the relief  
 will be soon cut off. I think in these cases it is necessary  
 to give a little of the disease, if they would be an agent in  
 a severe case, but time, it will be necessary to give  
 from twenty to thirty ounces, if there is any from the  
 vein. The short vein stands where called the patient  
 to examination. The pulse is very weak. This  
 circumstance, maybe, helps us to understand,  
 but, it should not, for it is certainly a symptom  
 one and only for the life of blood when the patient  
 we should find the pulse almost insensible to the pulse  
 the first operation and it should vary from four  
 or five, six, seven, we must still preserve, and search  
 in the second time and a gain of deemed necessary.  
 As we repeat we will find the system to recover from it,  
 a severe preservation and a case of common inflammation  
 when we repeat blood, by far more easy to manage  
 than the case immediately preceding in the practice  
 of the Europeans; to extract but a small quantity



at a time, and frequency, is certainly incalculable, especially in this season. No one who will take into consideration the importance, situation and extensive sympathy which exists between the organ, and the whole frame, but will coincide in the validity and justness of this opinion: it is only when the case is, off at the disease; choosing on with the ordinary and in, suitable as time, who would not rather of languish it, by one dash of water as it were, than to stand and behold it, consuming the patient by only using those means, which are calculated merely to mitigate it, or induce it, if it does this, which I rather expect it does not, and aggravates it.

The next which I wish to mention is, that they are generally recommended and ought never to be omitted after the weakness of the pulse is reduced by sweating. When applied they should be large enough to cover the whole region of the stomach, for a cold lesser cause, so more harm than a minor one, but the effect are manifestly, rather, - aiding



on the same purpose, stimulations to the abdomen are  
 of use, either with hot water or cloths, or  
 of hot water, or spirituous liquor, with various kinds  
 of oil. But they should not make any violent in-  
 jection or in diuresis, but at least induce to the  
 tongue and ease of the patient. The crumbly state  
 of the stomach prevents all kind of medicine im-  
 mediately received into it; from this circumstance we  
 are in a great measure precluded from the  
 employment of internal remedies, but it becomes  
 indispensably necessary, that the bowels should be  
 opened when we are prevented from this course.  
 we must resort to emollient injections and they  
 should be composed of the mildest ingredients,  
 as they are principally by mechanical action, and  
 should be thrown up the rectum in large  
 quantities. It is also necessary in many cases, that  
 we may derive the greatest advantage from the enema;  
 it is read, is, frequently, that we not only break the  
 bowels in a crumbly state, but also cause the injec-

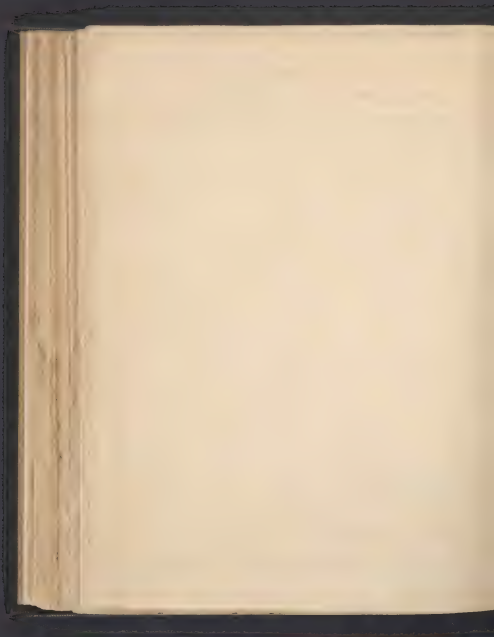




diem, to operate as a fermentum to the humors.  
 As soon as the stomach is recovered to a state in  
 which it is able to retain any thing, we should endeavor  
 to give the most, more easily, by liquors  
 or, sugar; the medicines most proper to effect this  
 purpose are either Sacchar. alb. or balsam. The  
 latter is by far the most able in very closely reasoning,  
 it can be more easily taken and retained on  
 the stomach than any other substance; it is a  
 good food, and thereby is capable to create con-  
 sistent, therefore, can be given. In every the medicines  
 cannot be rejected. As an example some of the most  
 safe are highly recommended in the case of  
 anasarca, these the most highly than of it is not  
 safe, it is necessary as far as this disease is  
 concerned, it is more easily retained in the  
 stomach than any other medicine. In Lepra  
 miliarum and Lepra morbus; it is certainly very  
 beneficial in the latter disease I have witnessed its  
 efficacy myself. The stomach is transmitted empty



By the action, the vomiting of blood is checked by it,  
 and the natural action is established downwards.  
 In the same manner, if an attack of gastritis is  
 a very important indication to relax the stomach  
 in some measure, & to give, instead of food, in the  
 first instance, medicine, in lime water, and milk;  
 if this should be more effectual, we should  
 resort to anodyne injection. In the present  
 case the warm bath may be employed with great  
 advantage. This is certainly a great utility, it has  
 a tendency to excite, & fortify, & imitate  
 the stomach in its action, & to the case in-  
 creases the action, and gives a considerable de-  
 crease to the increased action; but, this remedy should  
 not be resorted to until the violence of the inflammation  
 is somewhat subdued by the directly deobstruent  
 remedies. It is recommended by authors in the disease  
 now, to drink freely of mucilaginous mixtures to  
 protect the stomach from the action of irrita-  
 ble matter, either received or generated within; but



this practice is not found to have this effect, altogether; but on the contrary, to be very mischievous, it increases the irritability of the stomach and thereby keeps up the vomiting. To allay thirst we should direct a small quantity of fluid to be swallowed as possible. By delaying the stomach with fluid as has been recommended by writers will not answer, we do not allay the thirst but aggravate the disease. By giving drink in small quantities we shall avoid the danger of increasing the vomiting, and the thirst will be better allayed than if the patient were allowed to drink as much as he pleased.

If the disease still progresses and symptoms of approaching gangrene appear, we must rely principally upon opium; this is one of the most imperious remedies in the phlegmasia and especially in gastritis; it undoubtedly, opposes the power of arresting a tendency to gangrene and mortification. We have proof of its efficacy not only in this disease, but also in every case of inflammation. This



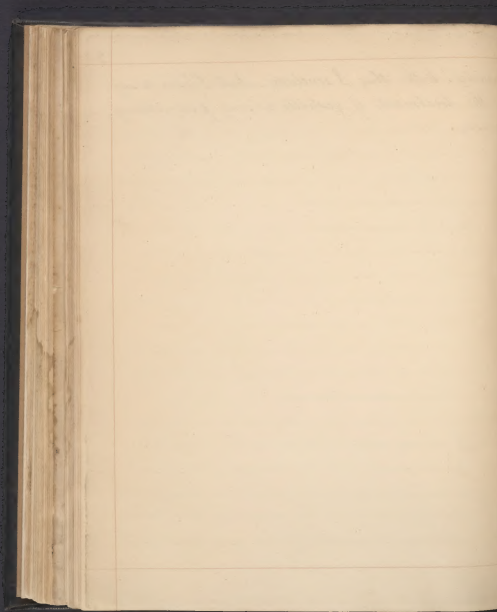
Observation is not of late date, it has long existed and prevails at present among Physicians. Especially as regards gastritis and enteritis, it displays its utility most strikingly at that point in which active inflammation is about to terminate in gangrene or earlier inflammation.

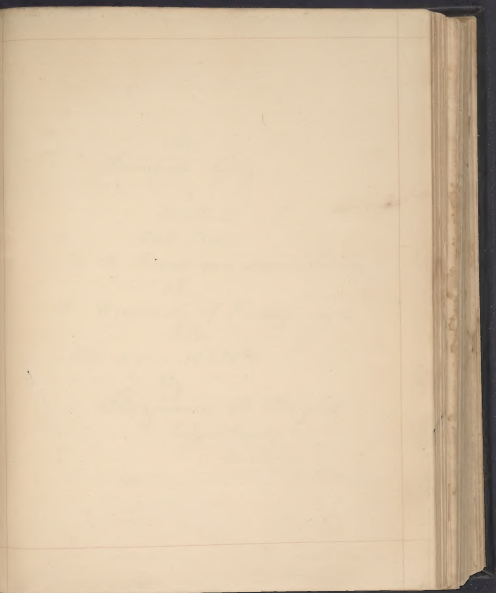
But if opium should fail under these circumstances, there is one other which we may resort to with great confidence; it is the common Spirit of Turpentine. This medicine was used by Dr. Paracelsus with great success in these years in which the yellow fever prevailed in this city, with a view to alay vomiting attending that disease. From analogy and other notions, practitioners were induced to try it in gastritis, and with very distinct efficacy: It has been used in Enteritis and Suppurative fever with great success, but it has also been used in that stage of inflammation which is about to terminate in gangrene, at this crisis of the disease, it is certainly one of our most valuable





remedies. With this I conclude what I have to say  
of the treatment of gastritis arising from ordinary  
causes.





1840-1841 - 2nd Year - 3rd Term - 3rd 363